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<http://abcnews.go.com/US/celebs-officials-collect-emergency-water-hydro-fracking-victims/story?id=15095794#.Tt59fSh2PdU>

Celebs and Officials Collect Emergency Water for Hydro-Fracking Victims in Pennsylvania

By OLIVIA KATRANJIAN

Actor Mark Ruffalo and film director Josh Fox denounced a controversial form of gas drilling this morning at New York's City Hall, where they collected water to bring to 11 Pennsylvania families whose tap water is flammable.

Their well water has been contaminated since 2008, when the Houston-based Cabot Oil & Gas Corp. leased their land to use for hydraulic fracturing, or hydro-fracking.

The process extracts natural gas by drilling more than a mile into the earth and pumping a mixture of water, sand and chemicals to open up fissures in the stone through which it can escape.

When one resident's well exploded several months ago, the state investigated and found that faulty casings in the drilling well had caused methane to seep into local drinking wells.

In addition to methane, the water contains unsafe quantities of heavy metals, radioactive material and toxic chemicals such as ethylene glycol, also known as antifreeze. Dimock Township residents complained of health problems after drinking and bathing in the water, and so the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PDEP) has forced Cabot to deliver clean water to the affected families for the past three years. The PDEP also planned the construction of a water pipe line that would deliver clean water to the region.

But when Thomas Corbett was sworn in as governor in January 2011, things changed. The pipeline construction was stopped, and the PDEP approved a decision to have Cabot stop delivering clean water to the 11 families in Dimock.

Corbett received \$1.6 million in campaign funds from the oil and gas industry, according to Common Cause PA. The industry spent \$747 million on Pennsylvania state and congressional elected officials.

"All I can say is corrupt politics, corrupt politicians," Ruffalo said. "It's pretty fishy. The DEP was building a pipeline that Cabot was going to have to pay for to the tune of \$12 million. For \$1.6 million, Cabot bought off Corbett, and as soon as he came into office, he killed the pipeline..."

"The state is now conferring with Dimock's political appointees. Their town board is now conferring with Cabot on what to do next. They've stopped us from bringing the water, from joining Binghamton Mayor Mark Ryan. It's disgusting, and I can't see anything other than corrupt politicians."

The governor's office was not immediately available to comment, but PDEP head Mike Krancer wrote in a [letter to the editor of Public Opinion Online](#), "The real issue here is not safety; it's about a very vocal minority of Dimock residents who continue to demand that taxpayers should foot the bill for a nearly \$12 million public water line along Route 29 to serve about a dozen homes. This issue has, and continues to, pit neighbor against neighbor in Dimock."

Ruffalo, who starred in "The Kids Are All Right," lives along the Delaware River with his wife and three children. His property lies atop

one of the richest natural gas fields in the world, the Marcellus Shale.

"There's just an enormous amount of hubris around this issue," Ruffalo said. "We're dealing with an industry that has pretty much had its way for the last 70 years in our nation, and certainly since [former vice president] Dick Cheney came into office. I think he ushered in an era of lawlessness for this industry and because of that lawlessness there's just an incredible amount of hubris and arrogance that's been gathered around them."

"They're used to buying off politicians. They're used to having their way. I don't think they expected this to blow up in their face the way it has. But that's classic of any arrogant person. That's what hubris is; you bring the damning of the gods upon yourself." Fox, whom Bloomberg News called the "Paul Revere of fracking," decided to direct the documentary "Gasland" after receiving an offer from a natural gas company in 2008 to lease his family's land in Milanville, Pa., for \$100,000. Fox was inspired to travel to more than 20 U.S. states -- not to mention Australia, Africa and the U.K. -- to interview people about the effects of fracking. He's now working on a sequel, which will be released in June 2012.

When asked why the PDEP allowed Cabot to stop delivering clean water to the families in Dimock, Fox said, "There's a very simple answer to that: corruption, incompetence or both. This is no way, shape or form a scientific decision. There is absolutely no basis in science or fact. It is purely political. It is unconstitutional. Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution states that Pennsylvania citizens have a right to clean air and clean water."

Article I, section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution states that, "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people."

But PDEP officials say their actions are not unconstitutional, and that Cabot satisfied the requirements outlined in their agreement before they stopped providing water to the 11 families.

But Fox doesn't buy it.

"The DEP tests showed that the water was contaminated by gas drilling," said Fox, referring to the PDEP's findings earlier this year that Cabot was at fault for oil and contamination. "And there has been no evidence to support that there has been any change."

"Does the inspector general of Pennsylvania need to look into this? Absolutely," Fox said. "The state has been bought off."

Fox, who is a Pennsylvania native, calls fracking an "epidemic," one that is trying to spread to New York state.

New York City councilman James Gennaro, head of the Environmental Protection Committee, said, "This would be a disaster in New York state. It would be a tragedy in New York state if small water supplies became fouled and people had to start hauling water. We're doing everything in our power to keep that from happening."

"It's important to help our neighbors. That's what's going to happen today. But this should certainly be illustrative of what we don't want to have happen here," Gennaro added.

Dimock resident Craig Sautner, who can light his tap water on fire, has been calling the PDEP everyday, asking for clean water. He says he was told he'd be arrested if he called one more time.

"Once the damage is done, it's done. It's irreparable," Sautner said. "The people are so desperate in Dimock that they have resorted to pulling water out of their creeks and ponds to put through their house for water. That's not right. We should not have to be doing that. The DEP says the water is fine in Dimock ... let's see them drink it."

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